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THE NATIVITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

The Holy Day of the Nativity of the Mother of God on Sept. 8/21 is based on Holy Traditions and the Apocryphal book written about 170 which is called the Proto-evangelism of James. No record of it can be found in Holy Scripture.

It is the first Holy Day in the Church New Year and the Tropar tells us why it is important. "Thy birth, O Mother of God, has brought great joy to all the world; for from Thee arose the Sun of Righteousness – Christ our God; Who having dissolved the curse, has given His blessing and having abolished death, has given us life eternal."

Her birth can be considered a miracle. Her parents Anna and Joakim prayed for a child for many years. They were a pious and God-fearing couple who possessed a spiritual wealth of virtues and material wealth which they shared with the poor. A shadow hung over their 50 years of married happiness – they were childless. Among the Hebrews this was a sign of disgrace. They sorrowed greatly.

On a great feast day, Joakim's offering was refused in the temple in Jerusalem. He went into the desert and wept and prayed and fasted for forty days. Meanwhile, Anna wept and reproached herself for being childless. Once she went into the garden and an angel appeared to her and told her she would have a child. It was difficult for her and Joakim to believe this as they were old. However, God kept His promise and they had a girl whom they named Mary.

Her Nativity had been prophecied by many Old Testament prophets. To note this on the 4th row of the ikonastas we will find her ikon is in center. She is flanked by ikons of those prophets who told of her birth.

"Thy birth has brought great joy!"

* * * * * *

It is not the talented people who serve the Lord best, but the dedicated ones.

I do not ask for wealth and such,
For earthly goods don't matter much,
I only pray I may be given
A song, to sing me into heaven.

JESUS BEGINS

On September 1/14 the Church observes the beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year. Tradition says that Jesus began His public ministry on this date. The Byzantine Empire started the civil year on the same day.

After spending forty days and nights in the desert wrestling with the devil (Luke 4:16-22), Jesus returned to His hometown, Nazareth. As was His custom on the Sabbath Day, He went to the synagogue and stood up to read. He was handed the book of Isaiah and read the sixty-first verse aloud:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable of the Lord."

(This verse is also quoted in full in Luke 4:18,19.)

Then Jesus closed the book and sat down. Everyone present stared at Him and He said: "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." This left everyone speechless. To think that the ancient prophesies of Isaiah were coming true. He also noted that the Lord sent Him to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The time had come for Jesus to set in motion a new way of life for us all.

As we relive the whole life of Christ in the coming New Year, we will renew the memory of events from the past, they become alive once again and we re-enter the reality of their timelessness. We are reminded by the Church to enter the season in a spirit of faith, prayer and edification.

The Patriarch of Constantinople presides at a service each year on this day

(Continued on Page 27, Col. 1)

TEACHING RELIGIOUS CLASSES

Some of the best memories many women have is teaching Sunday School years ago when there was very little material and it was not one of the priorities of the church. Up to the time of the pioneering work of these teachers, any religion that was taught was by the priest who came to the Russian School once a week. When there was no more Russian School, there was no more teaching of religion. These early teachers quickly formed an informal network and exchanged ideas and materials.

These teachers and those who are now teaching might be interested in hearing about the differences between the children taught in the early 1950's and now.

As a Sunday School teacher for 52 years, I note that there are differences in the children and the way they learn. They are more "visual" than were children years back. No doubt being brought up on TV is one of the reasons. Because of this the blackboard (which is black no longer) and more pictorial materials must be used.

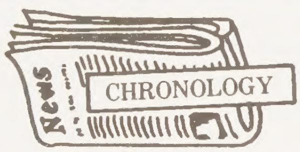
Another difference is how few of them sing. They simply don't know how. This means that we must start teaching even the simple, repetitive "Lord, have mercy." If this reluctance to sing continues, choirs will become passee and congregational singing will consist of the cantor and a few brave souls singing the praises of God.

Any reference to religion in public schools is a "no-no." This presents challenges as today's children must be taught things which children once knew. For example: On a discussion on Thanksgiving, the children all agreed that the reason we celebrated Thanksgiving was to thank the Indians for giving the early settlers food. Even after being shown a poster of the pilgrims going to church to thank God, there was no comprehension of this part of the story.

Would you believe that the lesson on Christmas, the Nativity of Christ brought much the same type of responses? Santa was "the reason for the season." What was

(Continued on Page 27, Col. 1)

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SEPTEMBER 1997

DIED: Father Dimitri Voytilla in Lakewood, OH; Pani Anna Sabak, widow of Father John Sabak, in West Virginia.

MOSCOW TV cancelled a showing of the controversial "The Last Temptation of Christ," which was based on a novel by Nikos Kazantzakis. The movie also faced much criticism in the U.S.

OBSERVING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY since founding is SS Peter & Paul Church in Jersey City, NJ. The celebration will take place on October 12.

AN ELECTRONIC ALMS BOX has been installed in the entrance of St. Claudio Church in Leon, Spain. People can insert a bank or credit card, punch in the amount they want to donate and get a receipt so they can claim a tax deduction. The parish priest said: "The electronic alms box is one more way, an up-to-date method, in keeping up with the times."

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH Bartholomew will visit the USA from 20 October-9 November. At Johnstown, PA he is scheduled to dedicate a diocesan office complex-Chancery.

CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL are under great pressure to limit their outreach and evangelization among non-Christians. A law is now under consideration to punish Christians who continue to preach or give out literature.

MANY PEOPLE ARE PAINTING IKONS. They vary in quality and style. Making available ikons in the Russian Byzantine style are Fr. Andrew and Galina Tregubov, 99 Sullivan St., Claremont, NH 03743. Phone 603-542-6273. They also have many gift items featuring ikons.

THE WORD "ORTHODOX" in most dictionaries is listed as an adjective. Users of the Internet's Infoseek Guide are reminded of this when they search for Orthodox. In the printout they find material about the Orthodox Church as well as Jewish Orthodox items. Perhaps it is necessary to be listed as Orthodox Christian to become more precise.

CANCER PATIENTS who need to go a distance for treatment can get free air travel nationwide. Call 914-328-1313 for information.

ANOTHER ORTHODOX CHURCH HAS BEEN DESECRATED. The Gospel was shredded, crosses were turned upside down, and the word "Satan" was scratched into the wood paneling. Chalices, robes and wine were stolen. SS. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Church is located on 815 Hamilton St., Utica, NY 13502.

THE DECISION TO REMAIN IN the World Council of Churches has been put on hold by the Moscow Patriarchate. There is heavy pressure on the church to shift to observer status.

YOU CAN HEAR THE VIEWS OF Patriarch Alexy of Russia on the Internet. The website includes photographs of the patriarch and many churches. It was inaugurated in late February to provide first-hand information in Russian and English on the history and contemporary life of the Church. Excerpts of the Paschal services were featured. Access the English language site at http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/en.htm.

RECENT INCIDENTS IN JERUSALEM have heightened tension between Christians and Moslems. A hole was found in the floor of the Holy Sepulchre, the site of Christ's burial. Toilets were built near the church and walls between a mosque and the Orthodox Patriarchate were knocked down on the pretense of restoration work.

AN EXHIBIT OF RECENT WORKS of the members of the St. John Association of Iconographers, Iconologists and Architects can be seen at the Antiochian Village in Ligonier, PA until October 18. For info call before 9:30 p.m. (419) 368-5335 and ask for Fr. Nathanael.

OAKWOOD PUBLICATIONS 3827 Bluff St., Torrance, CA 90505-6359 has released two books recently. An Iconographer's Sketchbook edited by Gregory Melnick and Psalm Verses of the Orthodox Liturgy which contains the ancient tradition of singing psalms with refrains. The Slav and Greek usages are given. Useful not only for church use but for home prayers.

CARDINAL RATZINGER, prefect of the Roman Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has written a new book in which he said that with the promulgation of the new Mass, "something else happened as well: The old structure was dismantled, and its pieces were used to construct another to the detriment of liturgical traditions. The reformed liturgy was presented as a new structure, in opposition to the one which had been formed through history... The impression developed that the liturgy is manufactured, that it is not something which preceded us, something 'given' but that it depends on our decisions." The mass reform seriously damaged the church.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA SHRINE is being built in St. Petersburg, Russia. It will be within a 5-minute walk of the Winter Palace and will be attached to the St. Catherine of Alexandria Church founded in 1763. The chapel will contain plaques engraved with the messages given to the children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917 urging people to say the rosary and asking that the people of Russia be consecrated to her under the title of her immaculate heart. The message will be engraved in English, French and German.

PATRIARCH ALEXY has been invited by Yaser Arafat to visit Bethlehem for the 2000 anniversary since the birth of Christ. Bethlehem and Moscow have been designated sister cities.

OCAMPR will hold a national symposium on pastoral care on Nov. 6-9 at Hellenic College in Brookline, MA. For more information about the Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion and about the 1997 Symposium write to PO Box 958, Cambridge, MA 02238 or call (617) 868-6557.

MEDIA BIAS AGAINST THE ORTHODOX CHURCH is well discussed in Orthodox Watch, 2001 No. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311. Please send a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope for a copy.

•Jesus begins

and he proclaims the acceptable year of the Lord. This is year 7505.

The tropar which is read on this day states: "Maker of the universe, O Lord who alone has power over seasons and times; bless this year with Your bounty, preserve our country in safety and keep your people in peace..."

•Teaching Religious Classes

shocking was that they did not know any Christmas carols! They could sing "Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer" and "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" but no carols with a mention of the Nativity.

One Sunday I asked them when Easter Break began. I received only blank looks in response. There is no such thing as a Christmas or Easter Break or vacation. It is now the Winter and Spring Break.

Vocabulary has changed. When Great Lent was about to begin the lesson was on Fast Foods. The question was "McDonald's" or "Wendy's"? There was also some discussion on not eating breakfast before going to Holy Communion. They have had it so ingrained in their minds that they must eat a good breakfast that teaching them that they must not eat or drink anything before receiving the Holy Gifts was quite a struggle. On the subject of fasting, most children eat lunch at school. Invariably there is meat on the menu. This creates a logistical problem which is beyond the ability of most children to manage. I found that a meeting with parents is most helpful.

It was always difficult to teach religion in such a way that it becomes part of a child's every day life. There are new problems, as most Sunday Schools are small and the class consists of children of different ages. Some have prior knowledge, some no concept. Many churches are again using "A Service of Prayer When Children Begin Their Instruction" at the beginning of the Church School year. This helps to emphasize the importance of the instruction. The Scripture readings at this service are from Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:16-21 and St. Mark 10:13-16.

ALASKA FUND

Helping to send copies of "The Herald" to missions in Alaska are: Julia Guzy, Patricia Turkin, Dorothy Crossan, William Mizgala, Robert Rodka, Margaret Dolchak, Eugenia Kribales.

ORTHODOX CASSETTE PROJECT

The following cassettes are available for the month of September.

No. 16: Matt 9:27-35; Matt 14:22-34. This cassette contains compositions of Bortniansky, who lived from 1751 to 1825. It includes his famous No. 7 sung by the Russian Academic Choral Group in 16-part harmony, which is a rarity. There are solos by Nicholai Gedda. Included are "Bless the Lord, O my soul; Save O Lord Thy people and Lord now let us depart in peace." There are a few renditions by a Byzantine choir in English.

No. 17: Matt 14:22-34; Matt 19:16-26. This cassette contains compositions of Tschaikovsky sung by the Tschaikovsky Ensemble. All numbers are from the Divine Liturgy. It also contains outstanding meditation; homily and commentary on discouragement.

From a letter this month: "I am ordering two sets – one is for my nephew. I miss the Church Slavonic that I learned, love and sang in my "growing up years."

The price of the cassettes is $5 each or a complete set for one year of 27 tapes for $130. The tapes are keyed to the Sunday gospel readings. No handling or shipping charges.

CAN WE CHOOSE?

The gospels contain many sayings of Christ. When He says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6), we like that. It's soothing and has a nice ring. It's the kind of saying we can remember easily and repeat to ourselves now and then. It's a source of peace and comfort.

Jesus said many other beautiful things. Here are just a few favorites:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." (John 6:51)

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt 7:7)

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." (Mark 10:14)

"Be not afraid." (Matt 17:7)

We feel reassured by these kinds of statements, They sort of linger in the background and make us feel that the Lord is around and everything is OK.

But when Jesus says something such as: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it." (Matt 16:25)

How do we react? These statements rank with:

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you:" (Matt 5:44)

It's in the same class with:

"But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other." (Matt 5:39)

These sentiments make us squirm with discomfort and we start thinking, "Well, He doesn't mean it." We want everything to run smoothly and be comfortable. The fact is, though, lots of things are not running smooth and comfortable.

Discomfort, things not being OK, not running smoothly, even falling apart, all point to the Cross of which Jesus speaks, but they are not the Cross. When things are out of tune, lacking in harmony, through it all we have one certainty, that Jesus will be with us. He never said we would not have crosses but He did promise to be there to help us carry them. We should always keep in mind another one of his famous sayings: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I shall give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt 11:28-30)

•Kitchen Corner

spread over apples. Beat the 2 egg whites until stiff and spread on dough. Sprinkle lightly with granulated sugar and finely chopped nuts. Bake in 375° oven 35 to 40 minutes or until brown.

Optional: Try other fruits – blueberries, plums, etc. and other jellies or jams.

* * * * * *

We're fitting in too well! In the midst of a national decline of values, statistics indicate that the Christian community looks and lives like the rest of society. Certain one of our values must not be surrendered. We are admonished in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

* * * * * *

Plenty of people miss their share of happiness, not because they never found it, but because they don't stop to enjoy it.

WEEKLY MEDITATIONS

September 7 - 12th Sunday after Pentecost - Gal 6:11-18; John 3:13-17. O Gracious Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, You died for the sins of the whole world and were resurrected from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures to bring us back to life and to free those who were imprisoned in the darkness of sin. As You appeared to Your disciples and apostles after Your rising from the dead, also, come into our midst and drive out our fear, doubt, and sorrow. May we follow You into Paradise, where all Your saints and the just repose. O eternal King, hear the joyful voice of our heartfelt plea, and have mercy on us.

September 14 - 13th Sunday after Pentecost - 1 Cor 16:13-24; Matt 21:33-42. O Lord Jesus, You spoke to us in parables as a way to instruct us how to attain Your heavenly Kingdom. Now as Lord of the vineyard, show compassion on us for we have not followed Your commandments. When You come in Your glory on the Last Day to judge us according to our deeds, make us worthy to recognize You and become heirs of the eternal blessings, given to those who profess You as Lord and God. Help us always to be steadfast in the Faith, charitable toward all, and watchful against practicing wicked deeds. O Lord our God, look down from heaven and listen to Your servants praying to You and have mercy on us.

September 21 - 14th Sunday after Pentecost - 2 Cor 1:21-2:4; Matt 22:1-14. O Christ, You have prepared for us a wedding feast and have invited us all to be participants. Make us worthy to have garments full of light, so that we may enter into the bridal chamber ready to eat and drink the Divine Food and become partakers of eternal life. Cast us not away from Your presence, O Lord, but through the goodness of Your mercy, confirm our faith in You. Turn our sorrow into joy, our tears into laughter, and afflictions into hope. Preserve us in the grace of our holy baptism and our hearts with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Give ear to the cries of Your servants and have mercy.

September 28 - 15th Sunday after Pentecost - 2 Cor 4:6-15; Matt 22:35-46. O Lord and Master, Jesus Christ our God, Who commanded light to shine out of darkness and has illumined us with the light of the Holy Ghost, shine in the hearts of those who seek Your Face. Grant us to love You above all else and our neighbor as ourselves. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, may we walk in the path of Your commandments. Raise us up when we are cast down, and do not forsake us who put our hope in You. O Lord, our Protector, hear the prayers of those who flee to You for refuge, and have mercy on us.

Raymond Mastroberte
(Cantor and Ikonographer)

Please Note: There are several readings for each Sunday in September. Holy Days and pre and post-feat fall on Sunday and they all have assigned readings. Only one epistle and gospel reading were selected for the meditations.

SHALL IT BE CHANGED?

When did you last hear someone state that our Church is the original Christian Church founded by Christ? Some people feel that we shouldn't say this, that we should modify and compromise this claim so that others should not be offended. This reminds us of the following story:

A man starting in the fish business hung out a sign, "Fresh Fish For Sale Today" and invited all his friends to the opening. They congratulated him on his enterprise, but one by one they offered suggestions on his sign.

One said: "Why the word TODAY? Of course it is today, not yesterday or tomorrow." So the proprietor removed the word.

Another said, "Why the words FOR SALE? Everyone knows that." And off came the FOR SALE.

Another complained, "Why the word FRESH? Your integrity guarantees that every fish is FRESH."

Finally, only the word FISH remained, but an objector said, "Why the sign? I smell fish two blocks away."

We cannot change what is true just to please those who might object to our attributes. We have no right to change history. How much change can take place before the Orthodox Church is Orthodox no longer?

LET'S HAVE A LITTLE FUN

A SUNDAY SCHOOL teacher asked her young class how Noah spent his time on the Ark. As there was no response from the class, she asked, "Do you suppose he did a lot of fishing?"

"What?" responded a six-year-old. "With only two worms?"

Dabs of Thoughts

The four-line poem on the front page writes of praying to be sung into heaven. It reiterates the meaning of the word "Otpevaneyeh" (sing away), which is used in the Russian Orthodox tradition to mean the funeral service.

For over half a year from February 9, the Sunday of Zaccheus, which directs us toward the Lenten Fast, the Sunday readings on both calendars used in the Orthodox Church have been the same. In September, the Lukan jump takes place. This occurs on September 22, this year. At this time those on the "New Calendar" skip over or jump two weeks by starting the readings from St. Luke.

Prayer ropes or chotki, which resemble rosaries, are used mostly by monastics. Their use is regarded so holy and the prayer that accompanies their use is considered so exalted that very few saintly nonmonastics use them. The prayer said and counted is: "O Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

Yom Kippur originated in the desert, where the people would symbolically throw their sins upon a goat and the goat would carry them away into the desert. This is where the word scapegoat comes from. On the Day of Atonement the high priest confessed the sins of the people while imposing his hands upon a goat (Lev. 16:8, 10, 20, 26). The goat thus laden symbolically with the national guilt is expelled into the desert.

A child was asked what a saint was. Remembering the stained glass windows in her church, she said: "A saint is one the light shines through." Saints indeed shine with the light of Christ. And grace-filled, living people – saints in the making – illumine and warm others through their lives.

The Orthodox Church claims to appeal to all five senses of a person: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. But as we are accommodating to the world surrounding us, many churches are ignoring this precept. We find candles are missing (because they smoke up the ceiling) and incense (because someone is "allergic" or finds it "offensive") are no longer used in some parishes. What does the priest do, walk around with an empty kadelo?



EDITORS' NOTES

Our house is surrounded by oak and pine trees. At the beginning of September the acorns start to fall. The squirrels get busy digging holes and hiding the acorns. They are so plentiful that the lawn is actually slippery and the pinging on the roof as they fall doesn't make for a restful sleep.

Around the end of the month, the foliage is at its most beautiful. Earlier in the month some leaves turned a beautiful mauve color, but they were alone among the green. Now we enjoy looking at the reds, yellows and golds and will until it is time to rake!

For several months we have had a few choice words from Baba. Some people feel that she is a mean, old lady and others that she "tells it like it is." She really is a nice, old lady, and when we showed her some of the letters, she said: "Remember, it was the Babas who kept religion alive when the communists were in power. They were aggressive in keeping people quiet in church, didn't shirk from helping someone make the sign of the cross, and elbowed nonbelievers so that they could not enter some churches. Perhaps, I'm patterning myself on them." Do you think we still need the babas?

September is the beginning of the Church Year, and it seems like a beginning of activities. Religious education classes for children and adults start, we check our calendars more closely for Holy Days, and in the north we start hunkering down for winter. The Church needs volunteers to teach the classes, clean out the flower beds, rake the leaves and do minor repairs. At each Liturgy we pray for those who founded the church and those who love the beauty of the church. In our travels, we find so many fine people who are keeping the House of God clean and neat and pass this love on to several generations.

We'll be in the Carpathians part of this month. Will have much to write when we return. Pray for us.

The Strogens

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Mareea,

Yak tam kolo vas? Toot shitko awright noh yah mala takee scare! Tak bulo. Yah pokleekala nashyu krayankyu nah telephonyeh. Day after day ohna neh answer me. Yah dumam zhe ohna neh mozheh etee nah vonka all the time ee yah dostala take worried. Finally, yah zveedala me next door neighbor shtobe ohna me drivovala dah krayankee's house. Kolee me tam preeshlee yah peeshla nah front porchyu ee ringyuyu ee ringyuyu doorbell. Yah neh got any answer. Yah dumam zhe something is funny boh yah chewyu voices u housyee. Yah neh znam shto yah gotta do. Then me next door neighbor kreetchee ot caree: "Try the door. I'll call for help if you need it."

Yah bulla taka scared boh yah chewyuh zhe krayanka kreetchee ee moaning, uh housyee. Yah try the dveree. Ohne neh bulee zamkutee, ee yah teehenko sneaked into the parlor. Yah couldn't believe me eyes. Krayanka bulla sama yu housye! TV was on ee tam seedeela krayanka watching Soap Opera. Kolo yeh bullo thermos coffee ee dish with sandwichee. Yah, zvedala: "Krayanka, you OK?" Ah, ohna me kazhe to sit down ee budtee quiet poka yakees scene neh finish nah TV. Ohna neh hotcheela smissovatee nech.

Yah sealah. Yah watchovala yak krayanka talking to TV. Yah bulla tak shocked what I saw and chewla ot TV! Believe me zhe takee business zhe going on u nashem seli be arrestovali.

Yah relieved zhe nasha krayanka OK noh yah dumam zhe ohna more interested in yeh familiyah nah TV more than what is happening uh nash dull life.

Budte zdrovee
Hanya

MISSION FUND

Helping to send copies of "The Herald" to places other than Alaska to help mission work are: Patricia Turkin, Dorothy Crossan, Martha Bortnick, Jayne Richard, Robert Rodka, George Butchko, Jr., Eugenia Kribales, Helen Kolange and the members of the Russian Orthodox Catholic Women's Mutual Aid Society.

TAKE UP THE CROSS

When Jesus told His followers to take up the Cross, He did not mean that they should go out and dream up some hard times and suffering for themselves. Life holds enough crosses without thinking up new ones.

Illness is one of the natural crosses that enters every life at one time or another. Illness can bring about many changes and these changes can cause us additional suffering.

Sometimes illness is short-lived, such as flu or some surgery that corrects some unhealthy condition. Other times it is long-term and there is no recovery. In either case, the people involved often feel upset and angry that the sick person has forced a change in plans or lifestyle. This feeling is natural, for all illness produces stress in those who are sick as well as those who are well.

One author of books on family life offers this reflection: when illness comes, family members may react with compassion or with denial. When we deny that anything is wrong we also deny that a change is taking place in our lives. However, when we react with compassion, all the members of the family can learn to show sympathy and caring for the one who is sick.

Lord Jesus, You tell us that we must take up Your Cross to follow You. Help us to accept the cross of illness with patience and compassion. You are the great Healer of body and soul. Help us to heal one another with our caring and love.

THE BABAS TAUGHT ME

That in making the sign of the cross, we should touch forehead, chest, and both shoulders. Baba is unhappy with people who look as if they are swatting flies. She is also upset by those who do not make the sign of the cross during the service. "What are they doing, daydreaming?"

The sign of the cross is made whenever the trinity is mentioned, as in "Father, Son and Holy Spirit," and "Holy God and Holy Mighty." It is also made when we enter and leave the church and when we walk in front of the Holy Gates. We also make the sign of the cross before venerating an ikon or the cross or the Holy Gospel, during prayer at each ektenia and at the beginning of each prayer.

We do not make the sign of the cross when a priest or bishop blesses us with his hand or censes. We simply bow our heads.

These are just some of the times Baba feels that we are neglectful. She said, "If not sure, more is better."

* * * * * *

If we hem in both ends of the day with prayer, it won't be so likely to unravel in the middle.



Our tours to the Carpathian Mountain area of Eastern Europe coincide with the time of grape picking. Most hones outside the large cities have grape vines covering large areas of the yard. Our relatives always give us grapes which we enjoy eating on our bus travels. These freshly picked grapes bring to mind, eating grapes from the small arbor of grapes we had in our garden when I was young. We picked enough to make grape jelly. We always complained about the jelly because it was too runny and not like store bought. Would you believe that store bought is now runny and must be put on toast with a spoon?

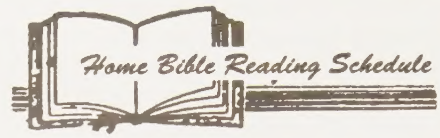
We always made apple cake during this season. How better to use a part of that runny grape jelly?

APPLE CAKE

4 cups flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 teas. baking powder
1/2 cup nut meats
sugar, jelly and apples
1 cup shortening
3/4 teas. salt
2 eggs, separated
2/3 cup sour cream

Mix flour, 1/2 cup sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in shortening as for pie crust until the mixture is like a meal of pea-size lumps. Mix the 2 egg yolks with 2/3 cup sour cream. Beat well. Add to flour mixture. Knead well. Divide into two parts. Roll out half to fit a cookie sheet (10 by 15). Spread with grape or tart red jelly. Cover with layer of peeled thinly sliced apples. Roll out other half of dough and

(Continued on Page 27, Col. 3)



SEPTEMBER 1997

1. 2 Cor 5:10-15	16. 2 Cor 12:20-13:2
2. 2 Cor 5:15-21	17. 2 Cor 13:3-13
3. 2 Cor 6:11-16	18. Gal 1:1-10, 20-2:5
4. 2 Cor 7:1-10	19. Gal 2:6-10
5. 2 Cor 7:10-16	20. 1 Cor 4:1-5
6. 1 Cor 1:26-29	21. **Phil 2:5-11**
7. **1 Cor 15:1-11**	22. Gal 2:11-16
8. 2 Cor 8:7-15	23. Gal 2:21-3:7
9. 2 Cor 8:16-9:5	24. Gal 3:15-22
10. 2 Cor 9:12-10:7	25. Gal 3:23-4:5
11. Acts 13:25-32	26. Gal 4:8-21
12. 2 Cor 11:5-21	27.
13. 1 Cor 2:6-9	28. **2 Cor 4:6-15**
14. **1 Cor 16:13-24**	29. Gal 4:28-5:10
15. 2 Cor 12:10-19	30. Gal 5:11-21

BIBLE STUDY

In the Epistle from (Galatians 2:16-20), the Apostle Paul speaks of things that are hard to understand: how do we obey law and yet remain in the freedom that Christ has brought us.

This has been a thorny issue for Christians throughout the centuries. In Galatia the problem Paul faced took the form of a movement that called for obedience to the laws of Moses in addition to the new duties commanded by Jesus – love of God and of one's neighbor. Today the problem shows itself in the division that exists between Christians who emphasize (taking their cue from Paul – especially from his letter to the Romans) that in our walk with God we are made right by faith **alone**, and those who insist that in addition to faith there must be **deeds**.

Faith would seem to be that which makes us **free** while obedience to laws – necessary in order for there to be good deeds which manifest the faith one has – seems to bring us back into slavery. Is there no resolution to this dilemma? Are we to be free and slaves at one and the same time?

In fact there is a way to resolve the paradox (a paradox consists of two things which oppose each other yet both of these things are **true**). First of all we illuminate it – we **enlighten** ourselves about it, by considering that our faith puts us into a **relationship** with God. And it is a relationship of **love**! First of all, faith shows us the **WE are loved!** It declares to us that **God** loves us – that He loved us and **chose us** long before we appeared upon the earth. It was for this that he created us. We are here because of this profound and JOYOUS MYSTERY of His love.

Then we find that He **invites** us gently and patiently to **love Him back**. Now, when we LOVE someone – or to put it in a way we can understand better – when we are **in love with** someone, we do not find it difficult to do things that are pleasing to the one we love. On the contrary, the more difficult, the more challenging the task the happier we are to do it, the more joy and energy we find in doing it. And in such a situation we do not consider ourselves to be slaves of the beloved. We feel ourselves to be wonderfully FREE. The energy of this marvelous love makes us superbly free and full of joy!

And yet at the same time we **are** being obedient – we are doing what pleases the one we love. The paradox of freedom and obedience remain but it finds its resolution in the relationship of love!

This is how Paul looks at His relationship with God – and how we are invited to look upon it. Think of the immense, profound, undying love shown us by Jesus, the One who came into the world for that very reason – to love us and save us. Let us draw near to Him in the silence of loving silence of prayer and the joyous singing of praise. Let us build our relationship of love with God with the mysterious help of the Holy Spirit, Who comes to dwell within us and awaken Love.

Archpriest Ihor Kutash, Ph.D.

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The greatest business of life is to prepare for the next life.